

From: Hank Jenkins-Smith [jenkinssmith@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, September 13, 2010 11:05 AM

To: john.kotek@blueribboncommission.net

Subject: paper on credible science

Hi John. The attached paper, which was published yesterday in the Journal of Risk Research, directly addresses why some members of the public don't believe scientific consensus (e.g., that deep geologic storage of SNF can be safely accomplished). It might be of interest to some of the BRC staff and members. Here's the abstract:

Why do members of the public disagree – sharply and persistently – about facts on which expert scientists largely agree? We designed a study to test a distinctive explanation: the cultural cognition of scientific consensus. The 'cultural cognition of risk' refers to the tendency of individuals to form risk perceptions that are congenial to their values. The study presents both correlational and experimental evidence confirming that cultural cognition shapes individuals' beliefs about the existence of scientific consensus, and the process by which they form such beliefs, relating to climate change, the disposal of nuclear wastes, and the effect of permitting concealed possession of handguns. The implications of this dynamic for science communication and public policy-making are discussed.

Please feel free to use or not, as you see fit.

Best,
Hank

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